

Understanding HIV

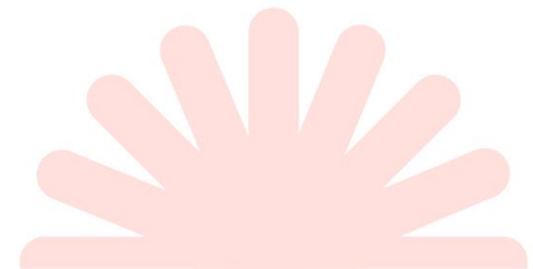
(Human Immunodeficiency Virus)



Today we will talk about...



- ✓ HIV basics: What you need to know
- ✓ Testing and treatment: Taking control of your health
- ✓ Preventing HIV: Steps you can take to protect yourself
- ✓ Understanding and breaking the stigma around HIV
- ✓ Sharing your HIV status: What to consider
- ✓ Finding help and support for HIV



What is HIV?



HIV attacks your immune system

**The immune system protects
your body from diseases**

**HIV can lead to serious illness
if left untreated**

Are HIV and AIDS the same thing?

- ✓ They are different.
- ✓ AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
- ✓ AIDS is when the immune system is very damaged.
- ✓ AIDS makes you very sick.

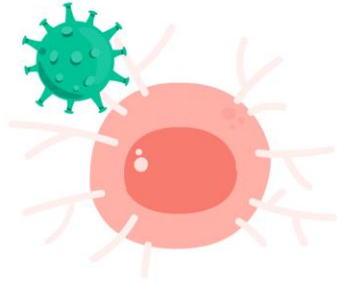
Without treatment HIV can cause AIDS



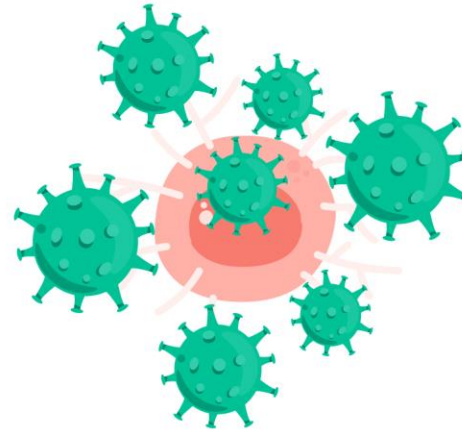
How does HIV affect your body?



Your immune system protects you from infections and keeps you healthy



HIV attacks cells in your immune system (CD4 cells) which help fight germs



Without treatment, HIV weakens the immune system and can lead to AIDS



With treatment, HIV is controlled and the immune system stays strong

How do you get HIV?

HIV is found in bodily fluids such as blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal fluids. It is passed on when bodily fluids from a person with HIV enters the body of another person.



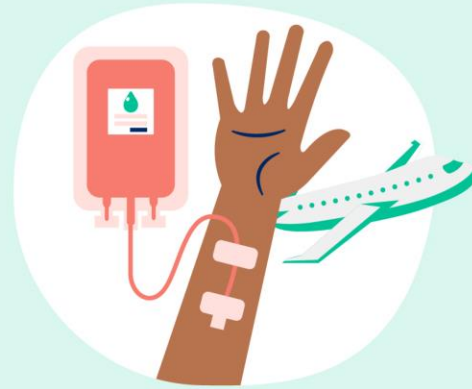
Having sex
without a
condom



Sharing needles and
other equipment for
injecting drugs



Body piercing
or tattooing
with unsterile
equipment



Unsterile blood
transfusions
and medical
procedures done in
some countries



From a HIV positive
mother to her child
during pregnancy,
childbirth or
breastfeeding

You cannot get HIV from...



Coughing or sneezing



Kissing, hugging or crying



Sharing a bed with someone who has HIV



Sharing food with someone who has HIV



Sharing a toilet, a bath or a shower with someone who has HIV



Mosquito or other insect bites

What are the symptoms of HIV?

You may not have any symptoms when you first get HIV.

Early symptoms may feel like the flu and include:

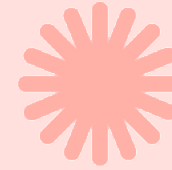
- ✓ Feeling sick
- ✓ Fatigue

Later symptoms may include:

- ✓ Aches and pains
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Sweating in bed at night
- ✓ Skin rash



Testing for HIV



| Blood test | | Finger blood test | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| HIV blood (antibody) test | | Rapid HIV test | Dried Blood Spot (DBS) test | MyTest HIV self-test |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small blood sample• Sample is sent to a laboratory for testing• Results in 1-3 days show if you have HIV | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop of blood from your finger taken by a nurse• Result is ready in 30 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drops of blood from your finger onto a sample card (self- collected)• Sample is sent to a laboratory for testing• Result is ready in a week | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop of blood from your finger (self-collected)• Result is ready in 15 minutes |
| Your doctor Sexual Health Clinics Family Planning Centres | | At a[Test] clinic | Self test kit ordered online and sent to your address | Register online and collect test kit from a vending machine |

Who should get tested?

You should get tested if you:

- ✓ Are a man who has sex with other men
- ✓ Have had more than one sexual partner and you didn't always use a condom
- ✓ Have a partner who is living with HIV
- ✓ Have a partner who is living with HIV and want to have a baby
- ✓ Have ever shared needles or other equipment to inject drugs or steroids
- ✓ Have had injections, tattoos, piercings, dental or medical procedures overseas.



What is the treatment

for HIV?



HIV is treated with medication called antiretrovirals (ARTs).

HIV treatments are very effective and lifelong.

The earlier you start taking HIV treatments the better it is for your health.

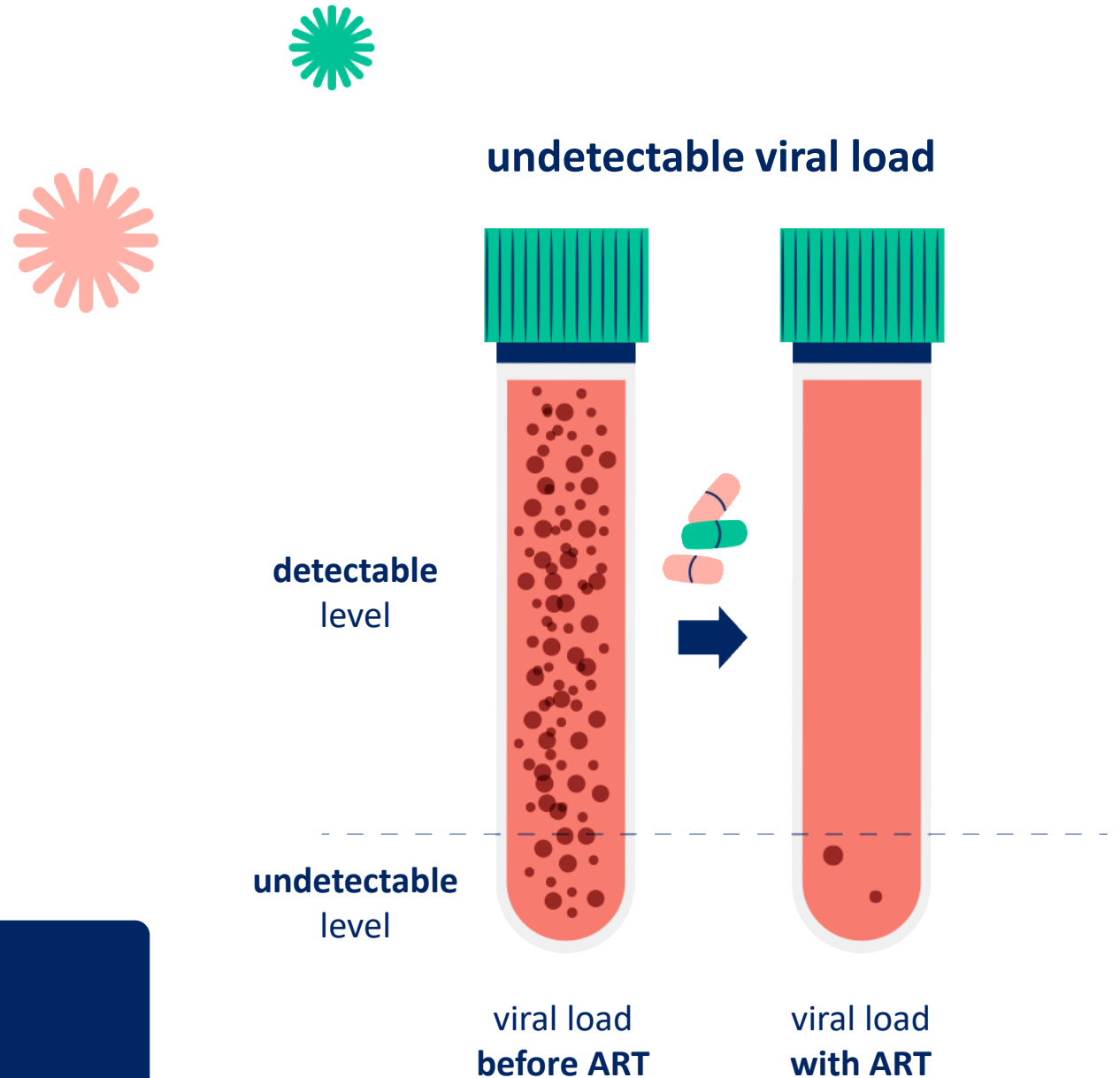


How does HIV treatment work?

HIV treatments:

- ✓ Stop the virus from damaging your immune system by reducing the amount of virus in your blood (viral load)
- ✓ Viral load describes how much HIV you have in your blood
- ✓ You need to take the treatment regularly to reduce your viral load.

An undetectable viral load means that you cannot pass on HIV.



How can I protect myself from getting HIV?

- ✓ Condoms and water-based lubricant protect you and others from HIV.
- ✓ PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) - HIV treatment to protect yourself from getting HIV.
- ✓ PEP (Post-exposure prophylaxis) - HIV treatment you take after you may have come into contact with HIV to help protect you from getting it.
- ✓ Use clean equipment to inject drugs (don't share needles).
- ✓ Test regularly for HIV.



Understanding stigma around HIV



Stigma affects those living with HIV, especially in relationships, sex, and sexuality.

Many people living with HIV are affected by stigma because of:

- ✓ Assumptions about how they got HIV
- ✓ Behaviours associated with HIV.

These assumptions can influence a persons' willingness to disclose their HIV.

Stigma creates barriers to healthcare and support.

Who to tell and not tell

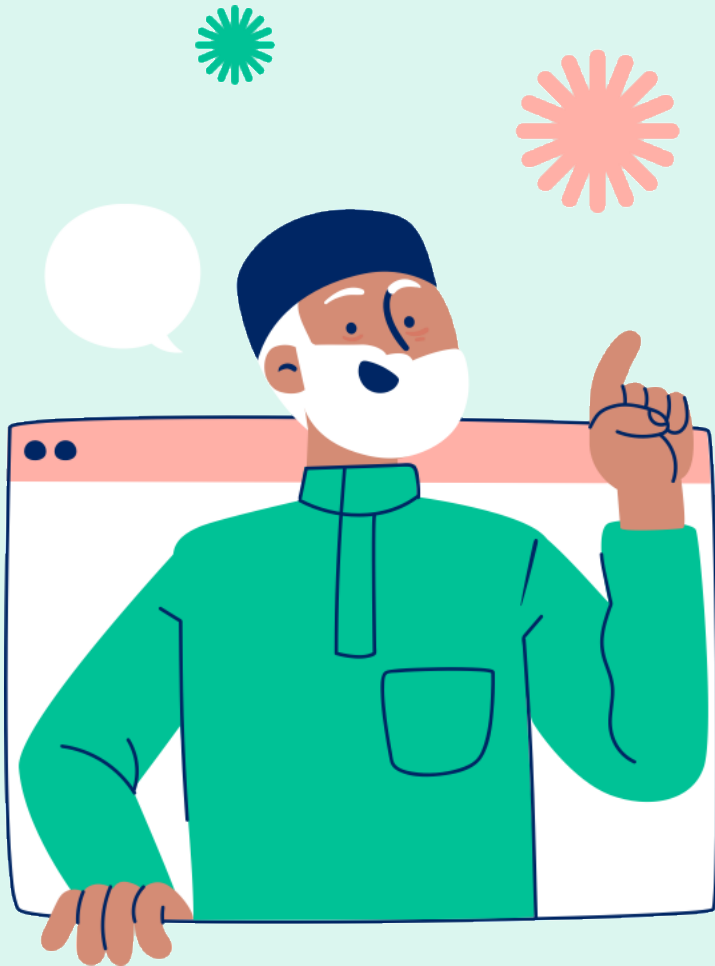
In NSW, by law, you don't need to tell someone that you have HIV before having sex as long as you take 'reasonable precautions'

Reasonable precautions include:

- ✓ Using a condom
- ✓ Having an undetectable viral load (from being on HIV treatment)
- ✓ Making sure your sexual partner is taking PrEP.



Where to get help



Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service

www.mhahs.org.au | (02) 9515 1234 | Forest Lodge

ACON

www.acon.org.au | 1800 063 060 | Surry Hills
(02) 4962 7700 | Newcastle | (02) 6622 1555 | Lismore

Positive Life NSW

www.positivelife.org.au | 1800 245 677 | Surry Hills

Pozhet (Heterosexual HIV Service NSW) www.pozhet.org.au

Sexual Health InfoLink

www.shil.nsw.gov.au | 1800 451 624

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF)

www.bgf.org.au | (02) 9283 8666 | Darlinghurst and Parramatta

HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC)

www.halc.org.au | (02) 9492 6540 | Surry Hills

Sex Workers Outreach Project | www.swop.org.au | (02) 9184 9466

Where to get help in your language

If you need assistance with talking to your doctor or health provider in your language:

- ✓ Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50
- ✓ The service is free and confidential
- ✓ Ask the receptionist to book a free interpreter for you.



What have we learnt today?

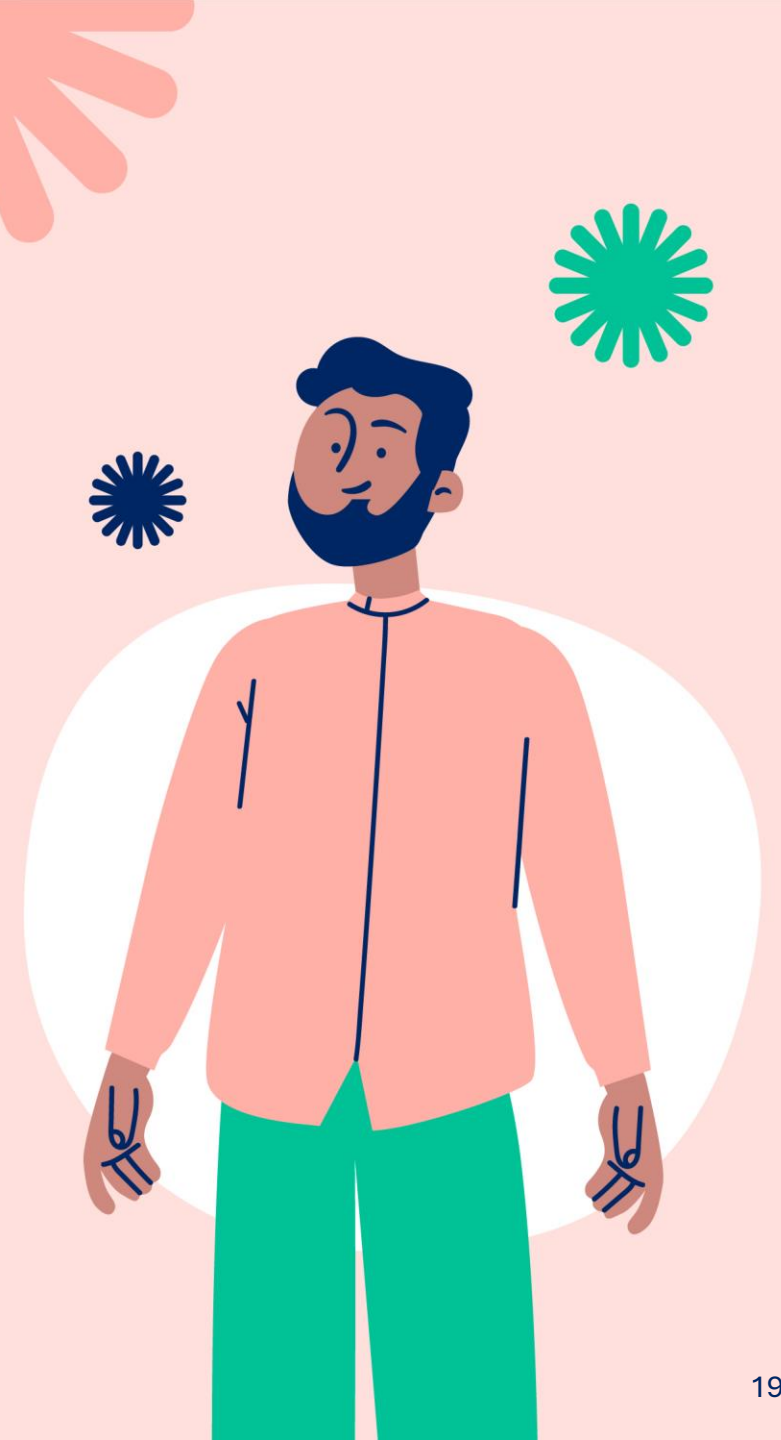


True or False?

1. You can get HIV from sharing a toilet with someone who has HIV.
2. HIV can be transmitted through mosquito bites.
3. A person with HIV who has an undetectable viral load cannot pass on the virus.
4. You can get HIV from kissing someone who is HIV positive.
5. People with HIV who are on treatment can live long, healthy lives.
6. HIV can be prevented by using condoms or taking PrEP.

Important messages to take away

- ✓ The only way to know if you have HIV is by getting tested.
- ✓ Regular testing for HIV is important.
- ✓ HIV can be effectively managed with treatment.
- ✓ Starting treatment early is very important for your health.
- ✓ Follow your treatment exactly as prescribed.
- ✓ If you need support or face discrimination, seek legal advice and support services.





Questions?

Developed by:

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MULTICULTURAL HIV
AND HEPATITIS SERVICE

